

WITH HUNGER ON THE RISE, HOUSE IS CUTTING APPROXIMATELY 300,000 PEOPLE OFF FOOD STAMPS

Key Points:

- **America can do better than paying for additional tax cuts for millionaires by throwing at least 250,000 people off food stamps – primarily low-income working families with children.**
- **Republicans are throwing people off food stamps at a time when hunger is on the rise in the United States – with the number of Americans lacking the resources to meet their food needs rising by 7 million over the last five years.**
- **Making certain working families ineligible for food stamps also results in throwing 40,000 low-income children out of the school lunch program.**

The budget package is cutting food stamps at a time when hunger is on the rise in America. On October 28, the same day that the Resources Committee voted to cut food stamps, the Agriculture Department announced that the number of Americans who are “food insecure” – i.e., people who lacked the resources to meet their food needs -- had jumped by 2 million in just one year and had risen by a total of 7 million over the last five years. About one-third of “food-insecure” households in 2004 were hungry at some point, while the other two-thirds were able to avoid hunger by taking steps such as visiting food banks or enrolling in food stamps or other federal nutrition programs.

The Majority’s bill has one provision that, according to CBO, will throw about 225,000 people off food stamps. The bill has a provision that restricts food stamp categorical eligibility to those on TANF cash assistance – denying categorical eligibility to those on TANF non-cash assistance, such as job placement services. The nonpartisan CBO estimates that this provision will eliminate food stamp benefits for 225,000 people – many of whom are low-wage working parents and their children.

According to CBO, the legislation’s second provision restricting food stamps for legal immigrants, even after being modified from the original bill language, will – after two years – throw 70,000 legal immigrants off food stamps. The original bill had a provision extending the residency requirement from five years to seven years before legal immigrants can qualify for food stamps. CBO estimated that this original provision would eliminate food stamp benefits for 70,000 legal immigrants.

The changes that will be made to the legislation simply grandfather in two groups of legal immigrants currently receiving food stamps – exempting them from the seven-year waiting period. The two groups are: 1) legal immigrants who are 60 or older; and 2) legal immigrants who have applied for citizenship as of the date of the bill's enactment. CBO estimates that, under these modified provisions, in FY 2006 and FY 2007, there will be 50,000 fewer legal immigrants getting food stamps – but that, thereafter, there will once again be 70,000 fewer legal immigrants getting food stamps (since, anyone with at least five years in the country now will meet the new seven year timeline in two years.)

As a result of the food stamp provisions, the bill will also throw 40,000 children out of the school lunch program. Under current law, children who are eligible for food stamps are automatically eligible for free school lunches. CBO estimates that, under the bill, about 40,000 children will lose eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunches as a result of their losing their eligibility for food stamps.